

PROVIDING HELP TO THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

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Congress Approves Measure Speeding the Federal Tax Deduction for Charitable Contributions for Haiti

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The massive earthquake that devastated the Central American country of Haiti on January 12, 2010 has been at the forefront of both the news and the consciousness of the American people as more information is released regarding the number of deaths, the overwhelming destruction and the outpouring of relief from all over the world. This earthquake is the worst natural disaster Haiti has experienced in more than 200 years. The death toll has surpassed 200,000, with over 1.5 million survivors left homeless. Roads, ports, hospitals and other infrastructure have been destroyed, and at least 1/3 of Haiti's population was affected in some way.

Americans have been responding to this devastation with overwhelming generosity, with donors contributing more than \$220 million to major U.S. relief groups since January 12. Southwest Virginians have contributed supplies, time and funds, and there have been many inspiring stories of citizens going above and beyond in order to help those affected in Haiti.

In order to encourage such charitable donations, Congress has approved and the President signed into law a measure, of which I was a cosponsor, to speed up the scheduled tax deduction for charitable contributions to Haiti. The measure enables individuals making a charitable contribution after January 11, 2010 and before March 1, 2010 to the victims of the Haiti earthquake to claim these contributions as tax deductible on their 2009 tax return, instead of having to wait until 2010 to receive the deduction. Donations made by cellular phone and text messaging are included under the measure.

Also, Congress approved with my strong support, and the President has signed into law, the Emergency Aid to American Survivors of the Haiti Earthquake Act, a measure which allows use of the U.S. Repatriation Assistance Fund to reimburse states which incur the cost of assisting Americans who are returning from Haiti following the earthquake. This assistance can include travel expenses, lodging, food and immediate medical care for American survivors of the disaster. Many have already been evacuated and returned to the U.S., but there are many more that still require support to ensure their safe return.

If you would like to donate, or want more information regarding Haiti assistance and relief efforts, please visit www.usaid.gov/haiti and see the Center for International Disaster Information contact information listed below:

CIDI Hotline: (703) 276-1914

http://www.cidi.org/reg_offr.htm

http://www.cidi.org/guidelines/guide_in.htm

<http://www.cidi.org/media/faq.htm>

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